

bited specimen of the Madras Tree Shrew. My familiarity with this specimen aided me to a great extent in identifying this animal in the field.

I think there is a lack of information on sightings or distribution of the Madras Tree Shrew. In this context, I

feel that it would be worth reporting the sighting of this animal at Periya, Wynad, Kerala.

February 22, 1989.

N.J. GEORGE

6. NECTAR FEEDING BY THREE-STRIPED PALM SQUIRREL *FUNAMBULUS PALMARUM* AT POINT CALIMERE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, TAMIL NADU

The food of the Three-striped Palm Squirrel *Funambulus palmarum* (Linnaeus) includes the nectar of flowers (Prater 1980). In the Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu, I noticed these squirrels extensively visiting *Rivea hypocrateriformis* flowers to drink the nectar. *Rivea hypocrateriformis* (Desr.) Choisy (Convolvulaceae) is a common vine forming mat-like thickets on shrubs and small trees and is an endemic in the flora of peninsular India. Its flowers are large, showy and fragrant, opening at dusk and closing at sunrise; the corolla is white, 7 cm across, salver-shaped; tube narrow, cylindrical, 5 cm; stamens 5 with spinulose pollen grains and the style 5.5 cm with bifid stigma (Mathew 1982). Its peak flowering period in Point Calimere is December and January. They bloom en masse and I found 25 to 100 flowers in a plan in a day and one to many squirrels visiting every plant. They visit a flower, hold the thalamus of the flower with a forepaw and the corolla with the other forepaw, bite and tear the tube at the base where the tube meets the tips of

the calyx lobes, and lick the nectar that oozes out from around the ovary. They are very swift in action and finish this job within 30 seconds before moving on to another flower, and likewise attend most of the flowers of a plant.

Out of 462 flowers from 10 plants I examined on 30 December 1988, 306 flowers were attended by these squirrels. Though they attended large number of flowers they did not damage the flowers except in a few instances. Occasionally they plucked the entire flower and dropped it after drinking the nectar. They were feeding actively from 0600 to 0830 hrs. At around 0900 hrs the feeding activities ceased, as all the flowers had by then faded. There is every likelihood that the squirrels, while moving on the bush for feeding on the nectar, transfer pollen from one flower to another. It is interesting to note that the Three-striped Palm Squirrel extensively feeds on the nectar of *Rivea hypocrateriformis* flowers and possibly also plays a role in their pollination.

January 19, 1989.

P. BALASUBRAMANIAN

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7. GRIZZLED GIANT SQUIRREL *RATUFA MACROURA* — DISTRIBUTION IN KUDIRAYAR

The Grizzled Giant Squirrel *Ratufa macroura* probably has a wider distribution than is believed. I have observed a few of these squirrels recently in the Kudirayar valley (25 km from Palani in Anna district of Tamil Nadu), which is situated on the eastern slopes of the Western Ghats below the Palani (Kodaikanal) Hills. It is hoped that the dam across Kudirayar stream, which is almost ready, will

help the species, which is now mostly confined to the Kudirayar stream margin, to widen its base. There does not appear to be any serious threat to the squirrel's survival here.

April 11, 1989.

PETER DAVIDAR